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Prof Norton*

THE
SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

VOL. V.—NO. I.

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

The numbers of the Scriptural Interpreter have been issued at such long and irregular intervals as must have caused dissatisfaction. The editor, who is alone in fault, has felt with how much reason the subscribers might complain of this irregularity. The trial of the last year has determined him however again to beg their indulgence in allowing him to make such a change in the plan of publication as will save him the pain of violating engagements which it seems to him improbable that he could fulfil. He proposes to issue the numbers as he may be able within these limits, viz. that there shall not be more than twelve nor less than six numbers in a year. Each number will contain 48 pages as formerly and six numbers will make a volume. The subscription will be taken for the volume instead of the year. In every other respect the work will be conducted as it has been from the commencement, and it is hoped that a single change in the time of publication will prevent a recurrence of the disappointment to which the subscribers have been subjected.

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VOLUME V.

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ERRATA IN VOL. V.

Page 206, line 12 — for 'Treneus' read Ireneus.

" 109, line 3d from bottom — after besides, insert *that*.

1455-7

THE

SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

ON INSPIRATION.

Few subjects appear to be less understood than inspiration. It seems indeed impossible that most persons can have clear ideas about it. Crude opinions are advanced, irrational theories are maintained, the plainest distinctions are overlooked, and truths that one would think as obvious as they are important are met with the sneer of contempt or the cry of horror. The subject has its difficulties; but there are principles belonging to it that may be clearly ascertained and ought not to be disregarded. The Bible has suffered greatly, religion has suffered greatly, the souls of men have suffered greatly from views which it has been thought criminal to examine by the light of common sense, but to which many minds would not and could not yield a blind acquiescence. I am confident that the Scriptures will never obtain the regard to which they are entitled from the bulk of intelligent men, till their claims are *properly* stated. Indifference or skepticism must in numberless instances be the consequence of

insisting on propositions which have no support but the belief or the fears of their advocates — the authority of names, or the presumption that their denial is equivalent to infidelity and irreligion. Instead therefore of thinking that the clamor which may be raised against any deviation from the popular faith is a reason for silence, it seems to me a duty to set the truth before people in the hope — and it cannot be altogether a vain hope — of disabusing their minds of errors so prejudicial. It cannot be, however prevalent or deeply-rooted these errors may have become, that a plain exposition of their character should not incline men to more just views of a subject in which the faith and hope of the world are concerned. Let it be seen, let men be made to understand, that the end at which those who question the correctness of these views are looking (no less than they by whom they are urged) is the establishment of Christianity as a divine religion, and it is impossible that calm and plain words should not have an effect in dissipating false persuasions.

I have said that the subject has its difficulties. The greatest of these meets us at the outset of our inquiries. The term *inspiration* is one of the most difficult to define within the compass of language, because it denotes something which can be understood only by experience, and none of us have experienced it. Still we must affix some meaning to the term, when we apply it to the prophets, the preachers, or the writers of former times. My explanation may not be satisfactory; yet I think it will be both clear and comprehensive enough, if we define inspiration to be — an immediate influence from God upon the mind, of which the recipient is conscious,

and by which he is made to distinguish truth. The manner of this influence or the nature of this consciousness I will not undertake to explain ; the fact that it is or has been enjoyed by any one can be certified to others only by the declaration of the individual, and can be proved only by such sensible facts as shall justify them in placing reliance on his assertion. The degree of this influence, that is, the extent to which it may go either in communicating truth or in superseding the use of the natural faculties, may be various. More or less knowledge may be imparted, and with more or less independence of the human powers.

Now it is plain that the question respecting the inspiration of the Scriptures involves two inquiries, which are however continually made to cover one another, and an attempt to separate which is often treated as downright wickedness. Were the men who wrote the Bible subjects of inspiration at the time, or previously ? that is, were they inspired in the reception, or in the communication of truth ? or in other words, were they inspired *as men* or *as writers* ? I say these are distinct questions, and they ought to be kept distinct. The authors of our sacred books may have been under the immediate influence of God while they were preparing these books, or that influence may have given them what they committed to paper after the consciousness of inspiration had ceased and when only its effects remained within them. In either case they were inspired, but is there not a difference between the two cases, which it is important to observe ? Suppose that I should sit down to write a letter, giving an account of facts which I had learned from another person, whether that person were

at my side dictating what I should say or correcting whatever mistakes I might make, or whether I relied on my memory for the statement which I might give of what he had told me, the source of my information would be the same, but the letter would not be composed under the same circumstances. It is clear, that I should be differently situated in the one case from the other, but still that in either case, and in one as much as the other, my authority would be the person from whom I derived my information. Yet in regard to the Scriptures these obvious truths are overlooked. It seems to be taken for granted, that if the sacred writers were not under the immediate constraint of inspiration, they were no more than common men. If Moses or Paul, for example, was not conscious of a supernatural action on his mind while writing, the one his narratives or his laws, and the other his epistles, they had at no time special communications from Heaven! Can there be a more illogical conclusion? I am not now attempting to settle the question concerning the nature or degree of inspiration which belonged to the Scriptural writers; I here contend only for the soundness of a distinction, the disregard of which by many Christians has caused them to be guilty of injustice to some of their brethren. A denial of an inspiration by which an author was guided while writing does not involve, nor suggest, a denial of previous inspiration by which he may have been qualified to communicate the truths, for a faithful exhibition of which he relies on his own powers. It is a difference in regard to the *time* or *purpose* of the inspiration, rather than in respect to its *nature*.

If proper regard be paid to this distinction, we shall

perceive the force of a remark which has been much misunderstood. It has been said that the Bible is the *record* of God's revelations to mankind, but is not itself a revelation. Never was a more just or innocent remark made, and yet it has given pain to many minds. Strictly speaking, the Bible is not a revelation, because it was not immediately given by God. It did not descend from heaven in its present form. A revelation comes directly from the Source of truth; it is the truth which He impresses on the mind of his creature. Any report of that truth can be no more than a copy of the revelation. Unless therefore the Bible was written by the finger of God, or by men who were passive instruments in the Divine hand, it cannot be, — if accuracy of speech be observed, it cannot be — styled a revelation. In a loose sense it may be called the revelation of God's will, because it contains or expresses his will; but in exact propriety of language the contents only of the Bible, that is, the truths with which the volume is filled, are revelation; the Bible itself, meaning thereby the form in which those truths appear, is not revelation. This proposition, which has been thought so dangerous, is not only harmless, but alone consistent with a proper use of words.

Hence again, the remark, that the Bible is a human composition, may be correct. It is liable indeed to misconstruction, but candor would give it a meaning at which neither faith nor piety can be offended. To assert that the Bible is a human composition is not to deny the divine origin of its truths. It is only equivalent to saying, that the Scriptural writers used language as any other men must have used it, and do use it, to convey in such terms as seemed to them proper the

sentiments which they wished to express. The *form* of the declaration is from man, its *substance* from God. The sensibility which carps at calling the Scriptures a human composition proceeds on the idea, that the writers were only scribes who followed the immediate dictation of the Divine Spirit; but this idea, as we have already seen, may be rejected by one who believes most fully in their previous inspiration.

The question of the truth or authority of the Bible rests on the credibility of the writers. They may be regarded as witnesses testifying to facts which fell under their observation or to communications with which they were favored. Their credibility results from the two qualifications of competency and honesty. Had they sufficient means of ascertaining the truth, and were they faithful in its delivery? These are the inquiries which alone we need ask. An affirmative answer to both entitles them to our confidence. Did Moses, for example, derive his Law from intercourse with the Deity, and did he give a true copy of the instructions which he received? If we are satisfied on these points, what more is necessary to clothe his books with a divine authority? Or were the Evangelists eye-witnesses of the scenes which they describe, were they also listeners to the discourses of Christ, and have they made a true report of what they saw and heard? Then what need is there of any other inducement to believe their Gospels? The divine authority of Jesus is proved by his miracles and his character, and his instructions are faithfully presented. I see not that an influence controlling their minds while composing the Gospels was either needful or probable. Men who had been the

subjects of divine influence, enlightening their minds and sanctifying their hearts, might be trusted to deliver to the world the disclosures which had been made to them; men whose opportunities are ample and whose honesty is undeniable are in any case accounted worthy of belief. Doubts respecting the immediate inspiration of the writers does not therefore affect the foundation of faith in the Bible; but, as it would not be difficult to show, permits us to avail ourselves of arguments to confirm that faith, drawn from the marks of genuineness impressed on these books, which it would be improper to quote as proofs of Divine workmanship.

It should be remembered that the Bible is not one book, but many. Here we may again observe that want of discrimination which is shown in the treatment of this volume. Remarks of sensible men and good writers often betray a forgetfulness of the fact, that the Bible was not written at once. Under whatever circumstances it was composed, ages intervened between the preparation of its different parts. We receive it as a whole, but it would not be a greater mistake to ascribe to a collection of the British Poets or Essayists the character of a single work than to speak of the Bible as a uniform production. Each part should be examined on its own merits,—in connexion indeed with the other parts, but still on the ground of its own claims to reverence. It does not follow from my denying that inspiration was concerned in preparing the book of Job, that I deny either the inspiration of Moses or the inspiration of his writings. I may think that Solomon drew his proverbs from the stores of his own wisdom, while I believe that Isaiah spake and wrote as he was ‘moved

by the holy Spirit.' I may hesitate about the divine origin of the last book of the New Testament, while I maintain not only the divinity of the Christian religion, but the direct agency of God in the composition of the Evangelical narratives and the Apostolical Epistles. Plain as such distinctions are, nothing is more common than the expression of alarm at an inquiry into the character of a particular book of Scripture, as if the authority of the whole volume were assailed or endangered.

The language with which we are most familiar tends to implant and maintain such errors as have now been noticed. To cite a common example ; — the Bible is called the Word of God. If the import of this expression with those who use or them who hear it were — that the Bible contains truths and commands which God has been pleased to communicate to the world, it would be a convenient and an acceptable phrase. But if by its use men are led to think that the Scriptures are the very *words* of God, that the Bible is throughout and in an unqualified sense a divine production, they involve themselves in difficulties on which the unbeliever will seize for his own justification and which the scoffer will make both an occasion and an excuse for his impiety.

These preliminary remarks, it will be observed, only open the way for fair discussion. They do not in any degree prejudge the subject of inspiration. But unless these truths are regarded, it is impossible to proceed in a discussion in which every one ought to take an interest. Different theories of inspiration have been advocated and divide the Christian world. I propose in some future articles to examine the principal of these theories.

EDITOR.

THE EXCLAMATION OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

MATTHEW XXVII. 46.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

The exclamation of our Saviour upon the cross has been much misunderstood. It has most commonly been regarded as the cry of utter despair, the exclamation of one who in deep distress and agony of soul believed that he was no longer beneath the care and overruling Providence of a merciful God.

At first view we might naturally be led to think, that it was with feelings like these that our Saviour suffered the words to escape from his lips. When we think of all the accumulated sufferings to which he was exposed,—when we recal the labors and privations of his life—the circumstances under which he was brought to the cross—the little effect his instructions had produced upon the nation to whom he had been sent—the weakness, the treachery, the false views of his disciples,—and the distressing bodily pain to which he was exposed—it would appear that disappointment and pain had been sufficient to overpower every other sentiment, and to leave him the wretched victim of despair; and we are ready to imagine that the words which I have quoted were but the expressions of deep bitterness and loneliness of spirit. But there are strong reasons that induce us to believe this is not the true light in which the language of Jesus on this occasion should be regarded.

In the first place, how entirely inconsistent is this idea with the instructions which our Saviour himself gave to

his disciples. Turn to the tenth chapter of Matthew and twelfth of Luke, and observe the sentiments with which he endeavored to inspire the minds of his twelve disciples, when he sent them forth into the world to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Our Saviour was well aware of the sufferings to which his followers would be exposed, and well knew to what source their thoughts should be directed in the season of their visitation. He knew that the strong arm of the Almighty was stretched out over them for their shield and defence, and to that power he called their attention. And does it seem to us probable, that in the season of his own trial he would forget the lessons of confiding trust which he had inculcated upon others? Would he have said to his followers, that not even a sparrow falleth to the ground unnoticed by God, and then suppose that he himself, the dearly beloved and only begotten Son of God, was overlooked and forsaken?

Look again at the whole character of the religion which Jesus taught. You will find its leading features to be a confiding trust in the presence and providence of God, and a reference to the life to come which elevates the mind above the crushing influence of temporal calamity. Despondency is not permitted to the follower of Jesus; despair is forbidden the child of God. The afflictions of earth are shown to be the discipline of a Father, whereby he would bring his children to a better knowledge of himself, to a higher estimation of the joys of a future life, to a better preparation for the kingdom of heaven. And is it then to be supposed, that the founder of this religion felt none of these influences in the trying hour? Did he offer to others that which

he clearly manifested had no influence over his own mind? Are we to suppose that he, who lived the religion which he taught in all other respects, in this particular gave a practical demonstration of the weakness and inefficiency of Christian faith? This surely cannot be.

Again, how many have been the examples in the world of the power of the religion of Jesus, to support the mind of the believer when exposed to the severest calamities and trials. It has been seen to go with the martyr to the stake; and as the slow fire of the green fagots has wound around his tortured limbs, it has caused his tongue to forget its note of pain, to raise the song of triumph before God. 'Looking not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at those things which are unseen and eternal,' the soul that was 'troubled on every side' has felt that it was 'not forsaken,' and the spirit that has been exposed to persecution has not been 'in despair.' You may see Stephen the first martyr, who before men had declared his faith in Jesus and in the instructions of his word, meeting the fury of the multitude as they ran upon him and stoned him; looking steadfastly unto heaven, and filled with the holy spirit, his vision is of God and of Christ. Is it to send upward the cry of despair, — is it to complain that evil has come upon him, that clouds of sorrow encompass him, that he lifts his voice in the hour of his final struggle? Like his Master, his prayer is for his murderers, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,' and his last request, that his spirit might pass from its tabernacle of clay to dwell with the mediator of the new covenant; or as some have supposed, that Jesus would accept the sacrifice of the life which he had given to his cause. And

was the power of religion less upon the mind of him who was 'without sin,' spotless and undefiled, than it was upon the minds of these his followers who yielded their lives in testimony of the truth of what they taught? We have no sufficient reason for supposing that it was.

Neither can we suppose that the words which our Saviour uttered at the time we are considering, were the sudden exclamation of one upon whom calamity came unexpectedly. Our Saviour was not taken unawares, and hurried to the cross ere he had time to prepare his mind for the event that awaited him. Full well did he know the cruelty to which he was to be subjected; it had long been a familiar subject to him, that 'by the hands of wicked men he should be crucified and slain'; and when meditating upon this subject he asked if he should say — 'Father, save me from this hour?' the thought at once occurred to him — 'But for this cause came I unto this hour,' and he changed the spirit and the form of his prayer, saying — 'Father, glorify thy name.'

It is no solution of the difficulty to say that the exclamation, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,' was uttered by Jesus in his human nature, and that he was at the same moment God and man. It does not meet the case. As has already been mentioned, the power of religious faith has been found sufficient to sustain the spirit of the good man when he has been called to severe personal suffering; and even upon the supposition that it was human nature that was suffering upon the cross in the person of our Saviour, we know of nothing in his character which should prevent his receiving all the comforts which religious faith has it in its power to bestow.

Another mode of understanding the passage is, by supposing that it was not used as the language of supplication, nor of despair, but merely as words of deprecation, and is to be understood as uttered in reference to others and not to our Lord himself. Jesus knew the feelings of those who stood around his cross, the witnesses of his sufferings. He had called himself the Son of God, that Messiah that was to be sent into the world. They were aware of the claims which he had made upon their consideration. But the present circumstances of his condition seemed indeed most adverse to the support of these claims. An associate of those who were suffering as malefactors, 'he was numbered with the transgressors,' and the taunting reproach of the Jews was — 'he saved others, himself he cannot save.' They saw that he was forsaken by all but a single individual of those who had been his familiar associates, and it was most natural that they should imagine that he was forsaken also of God. It has been thought by some that the words of our Saviour had a reference to this opinion of those who stood near the cross, and that the object of his prayer was to remove this impression from their minds. The interpretation put upon the Saviour's words by those who advocate this view of them is — 'My God, my God, let it not appear that thou hast forsaken me.' And in conformity with the same idea it might further be said, that the earthquake and the rending of the rocks and the unusual darkness that followed might be regarded as the direct answer to his prayer. It must be acknowledged that this view of the subject appears, when all things are taken into consideration, far more plausible than that which regards the exclamation of the

Saviour as the cry of utter despair, wrested from him by the severity of the pain to which he was now exposed.

But there is still another mode of explaining this passage of Scripture, which appears far more natural than either which has been mentioned. The words which our Saviour used are a part of the first verse of the xxiid Psalm, and this psalm was the funeral anthem of the Jews. Upon reading it you will observe that it is a strong expression of trust in God, of faith in his power to deliver all such as put their confidence in him. The Psalmist speaks of the deliverance which God wrought in behalf of their fathers — ‘Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou didst deliver them, they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded,’ — and goes on to declare — ‘For he hath not despised nor abhorred the misery of the afflicted, nor hath he hid his face from him, but when he called upon him he heard him.’ It is the prayer of one in deep distress on account of his enemies, together with expressions of confidence in divine aid, and hopes of future prosperity; and if it may not be considered as wholly applicable to the Saviour, is in many points at least peculiarly appropriate to the situation in which Jesus was placed. And when our Saviour quoted the first verse of the psalm, it was in reference to that psalm as a whole, and not merely to the part quoted. It was as though he had said — Now may the language of the psalm beginning, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me,’ be applied to myself.

That this was the idea that passed through his mind at this time and prompted the exclamation which he made,

seems to be perfectly consistent with his whole character and all the influences of his religion. It was consistent with the common habit of the Saviour to refer himself devoutly to God. We find him doing this when he was about performing any remarkable work ; and when the hour of trial awaited him, and when the agonies of death were upon upon him. At one time we may hear him declaring that he knew that God heard him always ; at another he prays that the will of God might be done ; again he commits his spirit into the hands of his Father, asking forgiveness for those who put him to death. Had he imagined that he was indeed forsaken of God at the time when he was suffering the death of the cross, we never should have had the account of his further prayer to God. The moral darkness that would have settled upon his soul, when overwhelmed as it must have been with the idea that God had deserted him whom at the river Jordan and on the Mount Taber he had declared by a voice from heaven to be his 'only beloved Son,' would have been grosser and more sad than the natural darkness which encompassed Judea when he had bowed his head in death, declaring 'it is finished.' He could not have committed his soul to God had he supposed that God had indeed forsaken him. No, not the cross nor all its sufferings caused the heart of Jesus for a single moment to waver in its confiding trust in the care and righteous providence of God ; and let not the language which we have been considering ever be quoted in defence of an idea so at variance with the spirit of his gospel, so opposed to all that we have known of his character.

J. COLE.

MISTRANSLATIONS IN THE COMMON VERSION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT.*

GOSPEL OF MARK.

i. 22. *At his doctrine.* Properly, *at his manner of teaching*; as Wakefield, Schleusner and Campbell. So too Matt. vii. 28. That it was the *manner* much more than the *substance* of our Lord's instructions to which this impression is to be ascribed, appears from the next verse.

i. 43. *And he straightly charged him.* Translators, almost without exception, deem it necessary to preserve the antecedent here—*And Jesus strictly charged him*; as Beza, Diodati, the version of Mons, Wickliffe, Newcome, Symonds and Campbell. The carelessness of King James's version in this particular is almost unequalled.

iii. 9. *That a small ship.* This *ship* was 'doubtless something of the boat kind, which probably belonged to some of the disciples.' A. Clarke. He adds, 'the word *ship* is improperly used in many places of our translation, and tends to mislead the people.' See for another like instance Luke v. 2, where Campbell translates — *two barks*, a very general term. Most versions are in accordance with the above correction.

iv. 1. *And sat in the sea.* Strictly it should be, *And sat therein* (viz. in the ship) *upon the lake.* So Diodati, Newcome, Pearce, Markland, &c.

vi. 1. *Into his own country.* This may be the more common rendering of the Greek; but all judicious critics

* Continued from Vol. IV. page 230.

see the necessity of giving it here a more confined sense — *into his own city*; viz. of Nazareth. So Dr Henry Owen, Wakefield, Newcome and Symonds.

vi. 3. *Were offended at him.* This word with its derivatives (whatever was its use in the seventeenth century) does not now convey the true sense, and occasionally produces nonsense. *They were scandalized at him*, or, *they revolted at him* is commonly preferred. Wakefield translates Matt. xviii. 7 — *temptations* (instead of *offences*). [The amendment of one or the other of these words is called for in numerous passages: — Matt. xi. 6, xiii. 21, 57, xv. 12, xvii. 27, xxiv. 10, xxvi. 31, 33; Mark iv. 17, vi. 3, ix. 42, 43, 45, 47, xiv. 29; Luke vii. 23, xvii. 1, 2; John vi. 61, xvi. 1; Rom. xiv. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 13; 2 Cor. xi. 29.]

vi. 20. *Observed him; and when he heard him, &c.* The translation of this verse is both tautological and clumsy. Wakefield's, how improved! — *greatly respected him, and did many things at his instruction, and heard him gladly.* Pearce, Newcome and Campbell render, — *protected* (instead of *respected*).

vi. 33. *Many knew him.* It is obvious this is not the right verb. There were few comparatively, as Campbell says, who would not know him, when he had for days been teaching among them, curing their sick, and followed by an admiring crowd. *Recollected him*, is A. Clarke's version; Wakefield says, — *distinguished him among them.*

vi. 54. *Straightway they knew him.* Here is another error from neglect of antecedents. Symonds asks, 'Who knew him? The disciples, according to our version; yet certain it is that the Evangelist does not mean them.'

It should be, 'the people of those parts.' The foreign versions generally, and all the English ones of modern date, avoid this error.

vii. 11. *It is corban, that is to say.* This perhaps is one of those places where even an exact translation may not suffice to show the sense of the original, without some additional light from commentary. Yet a nearer approach may be made to this than by the public version. Take, for example, verses 11 and 12 complete, as given by Campbell, and the intelligent reader will not want further assistance; — *But ye maintain, If a man say to father or mother, 'Be it corban, (that is, 'devoted',) whatever of mine shall profit thee;' he must not thenceforth do ought for his father or his mother, &c.* 'Corban' is the chief source of difficulty, — a Syriac word, which Mark, who wrote in a country where that language was not spoken, explains by the Greek phrase translated by Campbell in brackets. The construction of the sentence by King James's translators requires the foisting in of a whole superfluous clause. Compare the parallel passage in Matthew, (xv. 5,) where they are equally free and scarcely less obscure. Wakefield there translates, — *that is an offering to God*, (in the public version — *it is a gift*); this is just equivalent to what Campbell has here inclosed.

vii. 19. *And goeth out into the draught.* This passage is not of an inviting nature; but that is no reason for purposely obscuring any part of the word of God. Our public version however has done this; not indeed from excess of delicacy, — which was not a fault of its authors, — so much as from inattention. Wakefield translates — *And proceedeth to that part of the body that cleareth all the food.*

viii. 8. *Of the broken meat that was left.* Properly, *of the fragments which remained*; Campbell, Symonds and Newcome, in like manner. 'To speak of *meat* remaining from bread and fish, must necessarily disgust an English ear.' Prof. Symonds; who remarks in this connexion the partiality of King James's translators for the phrase *sit or sat at meat*; and naturally wonders that they should not always render, as they do John xii. 2 — *sit at table*. 'The expression is not only very uncouth, but seems to have been improperly applied' often. See note on Mark xvi. 14, page 22.

viii. 22. *And besought him.* Strictly, *beseech him*. The three verbs, *come*, *bring*, and *beseech*, are in present time in the original; so that King James's translators cannot be justified, as Symonds observes, for their bad English upon the plea of rendering literally. The reader will have frequent occasion to see elsewhere, as here, how prominent a fault in the public version is this confusion and contradiction of tenses.

ix. 1. *And he said, &c.* Properly, *And Jesus said*, (see note on Mark i. 43, page 16). Why is this verse separated from chapter viii.? Grotius, Dr Clarke and others justly observe that it belongs to the foregoing discourse; and should not have been disjoined from it. We find it connected therewith in the versions of Wickliffe, Tyndal, Coverdale, Beausobre and all the recent English translators.

ix. 12. *And how it is written.* This is clumsy and confused. Campbell translates — *And (as it is written of the Son of Man) must likewise suffer, &c.*

ix. 21. *Of a child.* Rather, *from his childhood*, as Newcome and Symonds.

x. 6. *Male and female.* See note on Matt. xix. 4, Script. Interp. IV. 226.

x. 42. *Accounted to rule.* All grammarians admit that the Greek for *accounted* is a mere expletive, encumbering the sense. It should be dropped in a translation. The original requires no more than — *that the rulers of the Gentiles.* Most versions proceed upon this principle.

xi. 13. *For the time of figs, &c.* Campbell renders — *the fig-harvest*; Adam Clarke, Newcome, Wakefield and Priestley — *the time of gathering figs.* Had our translators, who at other times can furnish with so little scruple a much larger supply of italics, have thus rendered and transposed, as those critics have done, this clause with that preceding, the many cavils of which this passage has been the subject would have all been obviated.

xi. 17. *Shall be called of all nations, &c.* But the true order of the words plainly is (as in the original passage, Isaiah lvi. 7,) — *a house of prayer for all nations*; and so Newcome, Campbell, Doddridge, Pearce, Whitby, the Rhemish New Testament, &c.

xi. 25. *When ye stand praying.* The Christian obligation of forgiveness, as Prof. Symonds observes, certainly extends to all, whatever attitude of prayer they choose to take; and ‘it would better have been, “when ye shall *dispose* or *prepare* yourselves for praying.”’ So too Adam Clarke. Campbell renders — *when ye pray*; regarding the Greek verb, as indeed it is, as little else than an expletive. Prof. Symonds quotes and confirms the remark of Markland, ‘that all verbs of *posture* or *gesture*, as “to go,” “to walk,” “to stand,” in good Greek writers, and some in Latin, have the sense of

existence (to be); and yet the practice of our translators is to render the Greek verb here in question "to stand," even when the context cannot possibly admit of it. Thus Acts ix. 7, the men who journeyed with St Paul "*stood speechless*"; though St Paul affirms that he himself and his companions fell to the earth.'

xii. 6. *Having yet therefore, &c.* There is no propriety in the illative particle here (*therefore*); it is a mere expletive. Tyndal rightly omits it — *Yet had he one sonne whom he loved tenderlye*. So too the versions of Coverdale, Matthew and Taverner. That it is so with those of recent date, it is needless to say. See the like fault in Luke xx. 29.

xii. 38. *In his doctrine.* This is not very intelligible. *In his course of teaching*, as most translators. This remark applies also to Mark iv. 2.

xiii. 15. *Not go down into the house, neither enter therein.* This version, it has been justly observed, 'makes our Saviour's direction both tautological and absurd.' Wakefield obviates this by rendering — *Not go down by the side into the house, nor enter directly in.* The Oriental structure of houses had a staircase without, by which one might descend from the top to the bottom, without entering at the passage through the roof. The first part of the precept respected the former of these; the second, the latter.

xiii. 29. *That it is nigh.* 'What is nigh? The Evangelist cannot mean again to say, that summer is nigh; and yet these words import it. The versions of Zurich, the Genevan and the Bishops' Bible have — *the kingdom of God is near.*' Prof. Symonds. Compare Luke xxi. 31. Newcome inserts — *the Son of man*. Pearce and Campbell have the pronoun — *he*; referring to verse 26.

xv. 39. *The Son of God.* See note on Matt. xxvii. 54, Script. Interp. IV. 229.

xvi. 14. *As they sat at meat.* 'It is far from being evident that the disciples were then at their meal; on the contrary, it is more probable they were indulging their grief.' Prof. Symonds, who quotes the Genevan Bible and Beza as rendering with him—*they sat together*. Adam Clarke also prefers this version. See note on Mark viii. 8, page 19.

J. P. DABNEY.

ON THE QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FROM
THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In reading the New Testament every one must have been struck with the great frequency of quotations from the Old Testament. In almost every page in the Gospels and Epistles we find either direct or indirect allusions to the Law, the Prophets, or the Psalms. There is nothing to surprise us in this; on the contrary, it would be a strong internal argument against the genuineness of the New Testament if the fact were otherwise. The language of the Old Testament was as familiar to the Jews as household words, and its history as circumstantially known to them as that of their own lives. For it contained not only their religion, but their national history, the biography of their great men, their literature, and their poetry. A Jew therefore could not without doing violence to his feelings avoid referring continually to the Old Testament, and it became to him, —in the language of an eminent critic,—‘a store-house of examples, illustrations, maxims, striking pas-

sages, analogies, correspondences, and quotations. A remarkable event would bring to his mind a similar event in the Old Testament. The general laws of truth and duty there enforced would be suggested to him by those circumstances to which they were applicable. A striking saying used upon one occasion would be applied to another of a similar kind, and when a Jewish writer was desirous of expressing his thoughts with more effect than he could do in his own language, the only words which would occur to him for the purpose of quotation would be those of the Old Testament.'

Accordingly we find that upon almost every occasion, and in every variety of form, the Old Testament is quoted and alluded to by the Evangelists and Apostles. There is perhaps no purpose for which quotations can be advantageously made which they do not subserve in the New Testament. In general they seem to be made upon the same principles which are observed by all writers who quote from books which they esteem on account of their wisdom or beauty of language or the acknowledged authority of their authors. They are introduced by some simple forms, such as, 'as it is written,' or 'the Scripture saith,' or 'Isaiah saith,' or 'have ye not heard;'—and such a degree of accuracy in quoting is observed as the nature of the subject requires. Sometimes the words of the original are given exactly, at other times with more or less variation, and at still others only the meaning of the original is preserved and the words neglected; and very often even the meaning of the original is lost, by taking words out of their connexion and applying them to a different purpose from that intended by their author. There is

nothing to object to in this freedom of quotation. Every writer enjoys and uses the same liberty with the works of other authors, and no one feels that he is guilty of unfairness when he quotes, even from a book which he holds in reverence, although he does not adhere to the exact language or regard the original connexion of the words. For instance, if I should take the words of the prophet Ezekiel, 'Can these dry bones live,' which were spoken figuratively of the desolate state of the Jewish kingdom, and should apply them to the desolate state of the degraded soul, — would any one convict me of unfair dealing? Certainly not. And let me again observe, that this sort of freedom in quoting the Old Testament was more natural and proper to a Jew in proportion as he and those for whom he wrote were more familiarly acquainted with the language used; — more natural, because the language would occur more readily to his mind; and more proper, because there was less possibility of mistake. There is but one rule from which they and no honest man could ever depart, — 'never to misrepresent the author quoted,' so that he should be made to say what he did not mean to say, or to deny what he meant to assert. From this rule we believe that the writers of the New Testament never did depart. As they were honest men, they could not do so.

Thus far our examination gives us very little trouble or perplexity. We have had reference only to those quotations which are obviously made for common purposes and upon common principles. These compose by far the greatest part of the whole; and we remark of them in general, that they are to be interpreted by the same rules by which we interpret quotations found in other

books. In this remark probably very few critics of the present day would differ from us.

But there is one class of quotations which seems to stand by itself and to demand entirely different rules of interpretation. This is where they are introduced as in the fulfilment of prophecy; with some such form as this, 'then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophets,' — 'all this was done that it might be fulfilled,' &c., — or, 'that which was written must be accomplished.' The question, — how much do these words mean? — is undoubtedly the most important in our present investigation, and we shall therefore try to answer it.

We would in the beginning however disclaim the intention of touching the general question of prophecy. We do not ask, — is the Old Testament ever quoted in the New as in the fulfilment of prophecy; but only, — is this determined by the *form* in which quotations are made? We ask then, — do the forms of quotation just alluded to necessarily mean that the words quoted had an original reference, or any reference apart from the mind of him who quoted them, to the circumstances to which they were applied by him? To this question we answer decidedly, — no. For these reasons.

First, because in some instances where the strongest forms are used a comparison of the original in the Old Testament proves that a fulfilment of prophecy could not possibly have been intended, except we deny the honesty or the judgment of the writer. Two or three of these instances we would look at. After speaking of Joseph and Mary going with the infant Jesus into Egypt Matthew says, 'And he was there until the death

of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my son.' If the mere form of quotation can ever indicate the fulfilment of prophecy, it does so here. But if we turn to Hosea xi. 1, from which the words quoted are taken, we find these words, 'When Israel was a child, I loved him and called my son out of Egypt,' — words which were spoken of the children of Israel, and referred to what had been done seven hundred years before. It requires no words to prove that they were not a prophecy of the return of Jesus from Egypt; it is inconceivable that any sensible man should have quoted them as such. The probable reason why Matthew applied them to Jesus was, (according to a conjecture of Paulus,) to remove an objection which would naturally occur to a Jew, that the Messiah should come in any sense from Egypt, — which is effectually done by referring to the fact of all Israel having been called from the same country; or he meant simply to point out an analogy which would be interesting to a Jew between the history of his nation and that of his Messiah.

Another instance of the same sort is in the same chapter, when the slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem is spoken of: 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.' In the place referred to the prophet is alluding to the mourning in Rama, a village near Bethlehem, when the Israelites were carried *through it* into *captivity*, and he exhorts the mourners to *cease* from mourning, 'because they

shall come again from the land of the enemy, and thy children shall *come again* to their own border.' It is impossible to interpret these words as prophecy; no fulfilment of prophecy can have been intended; there is nothing but an allusion to a similar lamentation and mourning which had occurred in former times in the same vicinity. I have selected these two passages, because they are quotations of words which were in no sense a prophecy of anything, but simply historical narrations of what had taken place long before.

An instance of somewhat a different sort is found in the first chapter of Acts, where Peter is speaking of the fate of Judas. He describes it as something which must needs have been accomplished, 'For it is written, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and, His bishoprick let another take;'—words which are found in the book of the Psalms, where they were spoken of the enemies of David, and though they are very applicable to the case of Judas, had no original reference to him.

Again, in John xix. 36, when it is related that the soldiers refrained from breaking the limbs of our Saviour because he was dead already, the Apostle says, 'For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken;'—in which he refers to words in Exodus xii. 46, 'neither shall ye break a bone thereof,' spoken of the paschal lamb, which was to be eaten without breaking its bones, in consequence of the haste with which the Israelites were compelled to eat it at its first institution.

Now if we suppose these and similar references to the Old Testament to have been intended as illustrations,

they are very proper ; it was natural and interesting for a Jew to make such allusions as these, and to trace such analogies ; they also give beauty and liveliness to the narration. But if we suppose them to have been meant as arguments from the fulfilment of prophecy, we involve ourselves in the greatest difficulties. We must either suppose the Apostles to have been very remarkably deficient in judgment, and therefore easily betrayed into what cannot but seem to us childish fancies ; or we must lay them open to the charge of making unjustifiable use of Old Testament language by wresting it into predictions which were never intended, for the sake of supporting their claims among the ignorant ; or, to get rid of hypotheses so unreasonable, we must throw away all sound principles of interpretation, and suppose that there is a double sense in the words of Scripture, or use our ingenuity in finding imaginary types and shadows, to which work there is no end and as little profit.

But secondly, we think that if the Evangelists had intended by the words ' that it might be fulfilled,' &c. to point out the fulfilment of a prediction, they would have been bound to greater accuracy in quoting. Where *illustration* is the object we have said that much freedom in quoting is allowable, but if prophecy is appealed to as fulfilled the change of a few words may make the whole quotation useless. Yet sometimes not only the words, but the meaning of the sentence quoted is changed in order to adapt it to the purpose of the writer, while the words ' that it might be fulfilled ' are retained. As, for example, in Matthew xxvii. 9, 10, ' Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him

that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.' The allusion is to a passage in Zechariah, (not Jeremiah); between which however and the case in hand there is no similarity except the mention of 'thirty pieces of silver,' and the word 'potter.' The thirty pieces were given to the prophet as a recompense for his services, and he gave them to the potter or image-maker to repair the temple which was defaced. We repeat, that such liberty would not have been taken with the words of the prophet if they had been quoted as (strictly speaking,) fulfilled in the events of Judas's life.

Again, if the Apostles had interded more by the form of quotation now before us than a natural application of Scripture language, they would have confined it to citations from accredited Prophets. But we find in Jude a quotation, beginning, 'And Enoch also prophesied of these,' — which is taken from an *apocryphal* book of undoubtedly fabulous origin, and could be quoted by any Jew only as affording language appropriate to his purpose.

But some one may say, — You succeed in raising difficulties in the way of explaining the words 'that it might be fulfilled' as referring to the fulfilment of prophecy, but there are the words still; what shall we do with them? They mean something. — We answer that these words are simply equivalent to any other form of quotation. And we think that we are justified in the assertion by the usage of the words in the New Testament, and by the manner of speaking which was then common among the Jews. As to the usage of the New Testament, we make but one remark in addition to what has

been already said. The same quotations which are introduced by one Evangelist with the form 'that it might be fulfilled,' or the like, are used by another in the same connexion and for the same purpose with more simple forms, such as, 'as it is written.' For example, in Matthew we have a quotation from Isaiah introduced with the words, 'This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness.' In Mark the same quotation is prefaced by the words, 'as it is written;' and in John, 'as Isaiah the prophet said.' So that it does not depend upon the *form* of quotation, whether these words were originally spoken as prophecy of John the Baptist; *that* is used indifferently, and was only meant to introduce the quotation in some appropriate way, no matter what. And in conformity with this remark is the fact, that the form 'that it might be fulfilled' is used by Matthew more than in all the rest of the New Testament together. Each writer used the form which was most pleasant to his ear.

We say next that this was among the Jews of the time a common method of quoting from the Old Testament. 'Take care lest it be fulfilled in you which the Scripture saith,' is found in one of the ancient Jewish writers; and in the Mishna (of Surenhusius, Vol. I. page 375), 'Concerning you the Scripture speaks when it says, Thy father and thy mother shall be glad;'—forms of speech precisely similar to those in the New Testament. And they meant just the same as our phrase, 'this verifies the proverb,' or this event proves that such a writer spoke truth. It is indeed to be particularly observed, that the word translated 'fulfil' meant origin-

ally nothing more than our word 'verify;' it meant the giving a *fulness* or *completion* to the words quoted, and not the fulfilment of a prediction. However strange therefore this use of language seems to us, it was familiar to the Apostles, and conveyed to them necessarily no idea of the fulfilment of prediction. They were justifiable in using it as others used it, — as a mere form of quotation. For it is a well established principle, that every writer has liberty to use the expressions which are common in his nation and at his time. It is upon this principle that our Saviour spoke of 'casting out demons,' and that we speak of the sun's rising and setting. Such incorrectness of language is of no importance when its meaning is generally understood.

Concerning the quotations in the New Testament from the Old then our opinion is this: — that in general they are made for the same purposes and upon the same principles which are recognised by all good writers; and that those forms of quotation which seem to imply the fulfilment of prophecy do not necessarily constitute an exception to this general rule, but are merely forms of quotation differing but little in meaning from other forms. They decide nothing as to the question, whether the words to which they are prefixed really denote the fulfilment of prophecy or not; this is to be determined only by a comparison of the passage with the original.

W. G. ELIOT.

TRANSLATIONS FROM EICHHORN.

I am indebted to Rev. Samuel Gilman, of Charleston, S. C. for the privilege of using an unpublished manu-

script — a translation, which he made some years since, of a portion of Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament. J. G. Eichhorn, successively Professor at Jena and at Göttingen and one of the most learned men of Germany, is the author of various critical and historical works. His Introduction to the Old Testament has passed through several editions in Germany, but in England and in this country is known only to the few who can read the original. The part which Mr Gilman has translated relates to the Pentateuch. I shall from time to time make such extracts as seem to me best suited to the purposes of the Interpreter. The writer discusses the question of the genuineness of the books of Moses, and shows that they must have been composed at the time and by the person to whom they are commonly ascribed. This position has been assailed by some scholars, as well as by unbelievers; and among the objections which they have offered it has been said, that the art of writing was at that time unknown. As I have heard that this objection is made by infidels among ourselves, I copy the section in which Eichhorn proves its weakness.

EDITOR.

WRITINGS OF SO EARLY A DATE AS THE BOOKS OF
MOSES ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

[Translated from Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament
by Rev. S. Gilman.]

The sacred collection of the Hebrews commences with five books, bearing date from the beginning of the ninth century after the flood, and which must now already have outlived a period of more than three thousand years. Modern judges of antiquity are astonished at

these statements, and will hear nothing about a monument of literature, of times so remote and among a people so illiterate as the Hebrews. This incredulity they sometimes account for by the impossibility that either the art of letters should exist at that time, or that writing-materials sufficiently commodious for so large a work were then to be found in the world ; and sometimes they account for it by no other reason than that they are not inclined to believe. These books are also attacked with the most vague and miserable witticisms by those who have never studied them at all, much less studied them in the spirit of the age in which they were written. Or another class will contend and decide upon *facts* by reasoning *a priori*, and will allow extravagancies in themselves which if they found them in these books they would openly denounce as the greatest absurdities.

It is altogether striking and worthy of astonishment that the far famed monuments of very illustrious nations of higher antiquity should be as it were extinct, while the oldest writings of the less celebrated Hebrews should have survived the time and the storms which have overwhelmed the nation itself. But this phenomenon is not by any means *unique* in its species ; for the preservation of Homer is certainly a fact worthy of equal admiration in the eyes of the thinking historian. But allowing that it were entirely unique in its species, to reject it on that account, and to refuse it altogether a place in history, is not only uncritical ; it is also a mark of great weakness, although conformable to the principles of our philosophical age, which no longer sees fit to receive ancient history as it comes down to us, but will have it stamped over according to the model of our enlightened times.

Writings of that period by an inhabitant of hither Asia are certainly not impossible. If on the contrary we do not absolutely and without reason deny all authenticity to the most ancient histories, hither Asia, comprehending under the ancient signification of the word Egypt with it, had been for a considerable time advanced out of its infancy. The Phenicians, (perhaps also the inhabitants of lesser Asia,) had already acquired extensive dominion; the Egyptians had attained great superiority in their political affairs; they had in their priests a learned profession, and were already in possession of many mechanical arts.

Besides, there was at that time in hither Asia by no means a deficiency of materials, requisite to the composition of written memorials. The manufacture of Byssus was then already flourishing in Egypt; and consequently there was no necessity that people should use any longer cumbrous stones for their written memorials, but they could avail themselves of portable writing materials. By all other known nations of any literature the oldest documents were at this time composed upon linen, and the Egyptians certainly used it for the purpose of writing; but the century in which it was first applied to this purpose is unknown. The date of it however might very possibly have been before the most ancient writings of the Hebrews. For the use of linen for the purpose of writing may be traced back beyond the destruction of Troy; it therefore bordered on the times when European Greece received the art of writing from Cadmus. It is therefore not very improbable, that linen came from the East among the Greeks at the same period with the art of letters, that is, in the tenth century after

the flood. And during the time that it travelled from Egypt to the Phenicians, and from these again to the Greeks, must not so much as a single century in those distant times have passed away, considering how slow must have been the spread of inventions among nations with whom but the shadow of any intercourse prevailed?

The art of writing also was at that time already in hither Asia; for the Egyptians had already sacerdotal scribes, who committed to writing what was intended for posterity. Hieroglyphics were no longer used, which at first expressed natural images and afterwards abstract ideas by graphic representations. The far more commodious art of writing was very soon substituted in its stead. We are directly led to infer its high antiquity, by the fact that the accounts of its origin are involved in the darkness of mythology. Why also should not the universality of the tradition that in the remotest period a certain Seth, Thet, Thoit, Theut, (all of them but one name for the Greek and English *th*,) discovered the art of letters, be a sufficient voucher for its authenticity? However, what is still more to the purpose — a hundred years after the origin of the oldest Hebrew writings, in the tenth century after the flood, Cadmus, who according to Herodotus was a Phenician, is said to have introduced letters among the Greeks. And if the writing which Cadmus brought into Greece came out of Chaldea, as Pliny relates from an ancient author and as the pure Chaldee names of the Greek alphabet demonstrate, how many centuries previous might the discovery itself have been made, and used by the Phenicians, before an adventurer would have strayed with it into the land of Greece. Again, if it be true that Sanchoniathon was the con-

temporary of Joshua, as many chronologists receive, another irrefutable argument arises for the use of Phenician letters before the tenth century after the flood. He drew his universal history from accounts in the sacred archives of his nation, consequently from documents which must have reached back far beyond the time of Moses. And supposing also that all the fragments extant under his name even with respect to the fundamental ideas were the work of a later impostor, (which however not one of his modern combatants has proved,) yet the most extravagant skepticism cannot deny that there really lived a Sanchoniathon in high antiquity, at least soon after Moses, and that he left behind a history of the world which was drawn from the records of the temples; consequently we have still a Sanchoniathon, though of a somewhat later age, but sufficiently convenient to prove the antiquity of letters. If even the fables of mythology are not entirely grasped out of air, but are probably only grafted on the stock of truth, why should accounts so credible respecting an early Sanchoniathon be destitute of any historical foundation?

Now if the man to whom tradition ascribes the oldest writings of the Hebrews is said to have been born and brought up in Egypt, that is, in the place of all others in the world the most distinguished at that time for its literature, and to have cultivated an intercourse with other nations in hither Asia; is it right in such circumstances directly to call in question the possibility of such early writings among the Hebrews?

Finally, about the time of Moses ceased the great length of human life; and a great length of human life, extending through centuries is always to be found among

nations only in times of tradition. Written history must therefore already in the time of Moses have been probably adopted.

Supposing however that all these fragments from ancient history did not remain to us, from which to deduce the possibility in question; supposing that both before and after these books a thick, dark night brooded over history, is it very decorous for an inquirer after truth to question purely on grounds *a priori* the authenticity of a monument of antiquity? The works of antiquity which have come down to our times must surely have had some period or other from which to date their origin. Whether earlier or later, must entirely be learned from the documents themselves. And if neither their contents nor any other internal characteristics demand a later century for their date than they assume to themselves or than tradition has ascribed to them, then must a critical inquirer not suffer any doubt to approach him respecting their solitary testimony, and the voice of tradition; otherwise, he is a contemptible reasoner, a random skeptic, and as far as possible from an historical inquirer.

DRUSILLA. — ACTS XXIV. 24.

In the account of the Herodian family in the last volume of the Scriptural Interpreter (IV. pp. 252—260,) the name of one who is mentioned in Scripture is omitted, and the table given on page 259 is so far incom-

plete. We read in the book of the Acts (xxiv. 24, 25,) that Paul made that famous defence, in which 'he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,' before Felix and 'his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess.' This Drusilla was a daughter of Herod Agrippa, who married his cousin, granddaughter of Herod the Great. Drusilla was therefore the sister of Agrippa the younger and of Bernice. She was distinguished for her beauty, and was twice married, first to Aziz, king of Emesa in Syria, and afterwards to Felix, 'the governor of Judea.' Felix was originally a Roman slave, a man of cruel and profligate habits,* who induced Drusilla, by the persuasions of a magician, as it is said, to leave her husband and become his wife. Her near resemblance in character to the other female members of the family to which she belonged is sufficiently indicated by these facts of her life. EDITOR.

ON THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE GENUINENESS OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

[From Carpenter's Guide.]

'A Guide to the Practical Reading of the Bible, by William Carpenter,' is the title of a small 18mo. volume published in London in 1830, which will greatly disappoint the expectations of the reader. One of the chapters however, for which the compiler acknowledges himself indebted to Hug's Introduction, I have thought might be usefully copied. ED.

* Tacitus says of him, 'Per omnem sævitiam ac libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.'—*Hist.* v. 9.

Professor Hug has introduced the discussion of this branch of the evidence for the genuineness of the historical books of the New Testament, in the following manner: — ‘Should any one without knowing anything further of them anywhere unexpectedly find them, and being thus furnished with them open them with the necessary scrutiny, what opinion would such a man form of their origin, age and composers, solely from their internal state?’ From the answer which this learned and acute writer has given to this inquiry, the following particulars are abridged: —

1. A person into whose possession the books of the New Testament should thus come would say that they were written in Greek, yet in none of the proper dialects of that language, but with a variation of expression and construction which is so frequently approximated to the Hebrew in the use of words and in grammatical connexion, that he would account the authors to have been Jews who spoke the Greek language. This exactly accords with the representation of the case, as it is made out by the Christian writers.

2. These books also contain so little of science and the historic art, that they manifestly are the essays of uneducated men, who, with the exception of a certain acquaintance with the Jewish writings, lay no pretensions to information and literature. The narration itself is so constituted that it represents them, notwithstanding its brevity, as having the demeanor of persons engaged in traffic; it depicts their situation and motion from place to place, the parts which the spectators bore, their expressions, their actions, and their appearance. This also is precisely what the Christians say of these books;

namely, that they were written by native Jews of plebeian origin and rank, without any literary education, who were either as eye-witnesses or by means of eye-witnesses informed of the events which they have described.

3. The perfect description of the age and country ; of the municipal regulations and manners ; of the history and geography ; and of the circumstances under which the events narrated in the New Testament occurred, is such as could have been given by none but contemporary writers.

4. The incidental agreement subsisting between these writings and the ascertained events and circumstances of the times is of all others perhaps the most convincing evidence, that they were penned at the time and in the places to which they are ascribed. Thus were the Jews circumstanced, as the New Testament implies, with reference to foreign nations and regulations, which crept into their system*, and gave to their national condition a bias which it first had under Herod the Great, but never afterwards. The invidious question of the *census* contains in it all the re-awakened prejudices of the Jews, and exhibits their disposition towards the Romans as it really was. The precept of reconciliation in Matt. v. 25 was enjoined in every item with a view to the Roman law *de injuriis*, according to which the complainant with his own hand dragged the accused before the judge without magisterial summons ; yet, according to which on the road an agreement remains open to him ; but should not this be accomplished the *mult*

*The sapient author of the *Diegesis*, (Robert Taylor,) makes this an objection to the genuineness of the New Testament.

assuredly awaits him, which if he does not discharge he continues in prison until its liquidation.

When our Lord is in conversation or company with publicans, the Roman system of farming and its oppressions are everywhere displayed. When he drives with scourges the money-brokers from the temple, we perceive the consequence of the Roman dominion and the influence of foreign manners, which allowed the money-changers to place their usurious tables by the statues of the gods even in the most holy places. We also observe, in the conduct of our Saviour upon the occasion referred to, the extent of the Roman toleration. This permitted no encroachments in the temples and religions of other nations, and therefore a private Jew unmolested maintained the honor of *his* temple, from which in Rome no laws could have screened him.

The parable in Matt. xviii. 23—34, represents a king that is, a *tetrarch*, who as far as himself and his own affairs were concerned was not under the Roman law. He consequently proceeds according to the ancient Jewish law. But the sequel, which relates to a common man, contains an appeal to the Roman laws against the *oberatos*, in consequence of which the debtor who does not pay is called upon by his creditor, who instantly arrests him and detains him in his house as a prisoner, as one delivered up to his will. The harshness of this law was indeed mitigated by a subsequent one; yet afterwards and at this time it had returned to its former severity, as it here appears in the parable.

This admixture of manners and constitutions forcibly proceeded through numberless circumstances of life. Take, for example, the circulation of coin. At one time

it is Greek coin, at another Roman, at another ancient Jewish. But how carefully was even this managed, according to the history and the arrangement of things ! The ancient imposts which were introduced before the Roman dominion were valued according to the Greek coinage : e. g. the taxes of the temple, the *didrachma*, Matt. xvii. 24. margin. The offerings were paid in these, Mark xii. 42., Luke xxi. 2. A payment which proceeded from the temple treasury was made according to the ancient national payment, by weight, Matt. xxvi. 15. But in common business, trade, wages, sale, &c., the *assarius* and *denarius*, and Roman coin were usual, Matt. x. 29, Luke xii. 6, Matt. xx. 2; Mark xiv. 5, John xii. 5; vi. 7. The more modern state taxes are likewise paid in the coin of the nation which exercises at the time the greatest authority. Matt. xxii. 19, Mark xii. 15, Luke xx. 24.

Writers, who in each little circumstance which otherwise would pass by unnoticed so accurately describe the period of time, must certainly have had a personal knowledge of it.

5. The epistolary writings also have internal marks, or, as they are called, the impression of a particular age, as well with respect to the materials as to the form.

As far as relates to the materials, these writings are not general treatises, without a country and distinct object; they were called forth by occasions and circumstances compulsory on the writers, and were therefore adapted to particular situations and readers and their individual necessities. Since these are confirmed in other documents, since the picture of the times which the authors preserve in them as they write these memoirs

has historical truth, we easily perceive that the writers did not labor on arbitrary circumstances, or those invented by themselves. The more circumstantial this picture was and the more accurately it was present to their mind, so much the more is it demonstrated that they saw these very times.

But in addition to this, in the Acts of the Apostles we meet with a considerable number of undesigned data, negligently scattered here and there, which now and then relate to the persons or are connected with other incidents mentioned in the Epistles, or promise even further instructions for their accidental elucidation. Where then we observe such an historical and obvious directory belonging to them and connect these memoirs with them, we cannot but remark between them a harmony, which is particularly requisite to the Epistles which according to their own pretensions claim a connexion with these events.*

If we afterwards pay attention to the local weaknesses, imperfections, and errors which are censured in Paul's Epistles, to the correction of which they were designed ; namely, in Crete, Corinth, Ephesus ; if we pay attention to these in the Greek and Roman authors, where some such traits are incidentally reprobated, we may often make the agreeable discovery that our Epistles have accurately treated of the errors of the age or the local imperfections noticed in each Epistle, and have sometimes delineated them strongly in satire and seriousness.

* This argument has been felicitously managed by Paley, in his '*Horæ Paulinæ*, or the truth of the Scripture history of St Paul evinced by a Comparison of his Epistles with the Acts of the Apostles.' We may even invert the case, as he has stated it in his title.

The system of morality too which is developed in the writings of Paul, Peter, and John, is unique in its character. It is not the peculiar and mechanical virtue of the Jews; it is not the virtue of the Greeks; it is not the political and warlike virtue of the Romans, not the virtue of the porch or of the academy, not even a sophisticated and declamatory wisdom of this life. It is the virtue of Jesus Christ, as he had proposed it in the Gospels. No person scarcely can read the morality of the Epistles without concluding that those who have propounded it were, as they have represented themselves, the hearers and disciples of Jesus.

Upon the form of these writings — that is, the arrangement and mode of treating things, the method of adducing proofs to support assertions, and the style and diction, many and interesting remarks might be offered by way of confirming the argument. But from what has been said we arrive at the conclusion, that the books of the New Testament were written in the age to which they refer, and by the persons whose names they bear; that is, that they are genuine, and not spurious or supposititious writings.

TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

MATTHEW XIV. 14—21.

Jesus miraculously feeds the multitude.

- 14 And Jesus coming forth beheld a great multitude, and was moved with compassion for them,

15 and healed their sick. But when it was evening his disciples came to him and said, This is a desert place, and the hour is late ; send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages 16 and buy themselves food. But Jesus said to them, They need not go away ; give ye them what 17 they may eat. They say to him, We have here 18 but five biscuits and two fishes. But he said, 19 Bring them hither to me. And having directed the multitudes to sit down on the grass, he took the five biscuits and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven gave thanks ; and having broken the biscuits he gave them to the disciples, and 20 the disciples to the multitudes. And they all eat and were satisfied ; and they gathered up the fragments which remained, twelve baskets full. 21 And they who had eaten were about five hundred men, besides women and children.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Vs. 14—21. Compare the narratives of the other Evangelists, Mark vi. 34—44, Luke ix. 11—17, John vi. 5—14. Our Lord twice fed the multitudes by a miraculous multiplication of bread and fish ; see Matt. xv. 32—38, (Mark viii. 1—9.) This was probably the common food of the Apostles and of the poorer class of people when travelling.

V. 14. *And Jesus coming forth*, — from the vessel, (Matt. xiv. 13,) say the commentators ; but it seems more probable that Jesus had landed before the people who ‘ followed him on foot ’ reached the place, and that he *came forth* from the retirement where he had been ‘ sitting with his disciples,’ John vi. 3.

V. 15. *When it was evening.* In verse 23 we read that 'when the *evening* was come,' after the multitudes had been fed and had departed. The Jews had two evenings, one of which began at three o'clock P. M. and lasted till six o'clock, when the second evening began. In verse 15 the first evening is meant, and in verse 23 the second. Mark says — 'when the day was now far spent,' and Luke's expression is still more exact — 'when the day began to wear away.'

The hour is late. The rendering in the Common Version is hardly intelligible — 'the time is now past.' Some expositors say — the usual time of dining. But the phrase which I have chosen corresponds better, I think, with the original, and is familiar to our ears.

V. 17. *Biscuits.* The Jewish bread was baked in thin cakes, and was always broken, not cut, ver. 19, Matt. xxvi. 26. 'Loaves' is therefore an improper translation. *Biscuits* more nearly presents the true form to the imagination than any other English word.

V. 19. *To sit down,* i. e. to recline in the Eastern manner. In this instance however our common English phrase would not mislead any reader.

On the grass. This is sufficient to show us, that 'a desert place' in the language of Scripture was not a sandy, barren waste.

Gave thanks. There is some doubt respecting the exact import of the original word. Does it mean to bless i. e. to give thanks to God, or to bless i. e. to ask a blessing upon the bread? Luke, ix. 16, says that 'he blessed them' i. e. the biscuits; so 1 Cor. x. 16, 'the cup of blessing which we bless'; but Matthew, xv. 36, in speaking of the other similar miracle says, 'he gave thanks,' and Mark in the parallel passage uses the terms as of equal signification, saying in viii. 6, 'he gave thanks,' but in viii. 7, 'he blessed.' A similar use of the words as equivalent expressions occurs in the accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, Mark xiv. 22, 23, Luke xxii. 19, 1 Cor. xi. 24. It is plain

therefore that 'to bless the bread' meant, to offer a prayer or thanksgiving over it. This practice was observed among the Jews, and the form which they used, and which probably Jesus adopted, was in these words,— 'Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the king of the world, who hast produced this food from the earth,' (or 'this drink from the vine.')

And the disciples to the multitudes ; i. e. they distributed the bread to the heads of the 'companies' or rows which were seated on the grass, who divided it each among his own 'rank'; see the other Evangelists.

V. 20. *And they all eat and were satisfied.* A miraculous increase of food in much smaller quantity is recorded in the Old Testament, in the histories of Elijah and Elisha, 1 Kings xvii. 16, 2 Kings iv. 42—44.

Twelve baskets full. The Jews were accustomed in travelling to carry their provisions with them, partly because they would not find places of entertainment, but chiefly that they might not be compelled to partake of food which their Law pronounced 'unclean.' After their dispersion among the other nations of the world this custom became so prevalent, that it was accounted a mark of a Jew, and exposed them to ridicule. Juvenal twice notices it, and the word which he uses is the same (in Roman letters) with that which we here find in the Evangelists.

'Nunc sacri fontis nemus et delubra locantur
Judæis, quorum *cophinus* fœnumque supellex.'

Sat. iii. 13, 14.

'Now the once-hallow'd fountain, grove and fane
Are let to Jews, a wretched, wandering train,
Whose wealth is but a basket stuffed with hay.'

Gifford.

'Cum dedit ille locum, *cophino* fœnoque relicto,
Arcanam Judæa tremens mendicat in aurem.'

Sat. vi. 541.

— 'he vanishes ; and straight
A Jewess, who without the city gate

Has left her hay and basket, pale with fear,
Enters and begs a trifle in her ear.'

Gifford.

As we learn that the Apostles carried their provisions with them, Matt. xvi. 7, (Mark viii. 14, 'Now they had *forgotten* to take bread,') they probably used such baskets, and it is an ingenious conjecture, that each Apostle filled his basket from 'the fragments which remained.' The size of the *basket* may be imagined from the fact that it was borne about in journeying.

V. 21. *Were about five thousand.* It was easy to ascertain the number present, because they were arranged 'in ranks, by hundreds and fifties,' which could be counted at a glance of the eye, Mark vi. 40, Luke ix. 14.

PRACTICAL REMARKS.

1. The stupendous nature of this miracle may not have struck those who are familiar with the narrative. None of our Saviour's miracles is more suited to excite and fill the imagination. Here were an immense crowd, weary and hungry, who were supplied by a constant and imperceptible creation of food. Nothing could be more sublimely calm, and nothing more emphatically expressive of divine authority, than the conduct of Jesus on this occasion. No wonder that 'those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.'

2. Our Lord's miracles were acts of beneficence. They were wrought for the relief of suffering humanity. He seems to have regarded this end with even more interest than the establishment of his claims as a divine teacher. 'He was moved with compassion for the multitude,' and therefore he healed their sick, and satisfied their hunger. Such was the temper of Jesus, and such the example which he has left us.

PROPOSALS FOR PUBLISHING A WEEKLY PAPER,
TO BE CALLED
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